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Volume 2 – 2009

Saving Grace: Resistible or Unresistible?

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Introduction

The question as to how an individual receives salvation is very important in theological discussions since the time of Jacob Arminius. Both sides of the Calvinist-Arminian debate hold that salvation is by grace but the difference occurs when the question of whether grace is resistible or irresistible is raised. In order to answer this question we need to understand where it fits in the context of the long standing debate over the proper understanding of salvation. The doctrine of salvation has been under attack for centuries. The question has always been whether salvation is something that God does or something that man accomplishes by himself or is it synergistic. Why do some believe and others do not? One might be apt to answer that it is because some exercise faith in the saving work of Christ and others do not. But where does the faith come from? Is the faith something innate in a person or is it something God gives to a person? If it is something innate in every person then all should be able to exercise it and if it is something that God gives, then why does He give to some

and not others? Is it because of something in them—special wisdom, goodness, or some greater exercise of the will, somehow an ability in them not to resist grace—or is it because of something in God? To be able to answer all these questions we will need to set the issue within the context of historical theology, probably from the time of Augustine and Pelagius to the present, but that would require the writing of a book. However, due to the brevity of this article we have chosen to discuss the issue within the context of the Synod of Dort and the ensuing Calvinist-Arminian debate.¹ This debate is a debate over human freedom versus divine sovereignty in salvation. Calvinism defends divine sovereignty and Arminianism defends human freedom. Since this debate takes its shape from the Arminian Remonstrants and the Synod of Dort, it would be logical for us to turn to the Synod of Dort at this point.

A. Synod of Dort

The Synod of Dort took place in the Dutch city of Dordrecht from November 1618 to May 1619. This Synod was international with representatives from Reformed Churches in England, Netherlands, Scotland, Switzerland, and Germany. The Synod was convened to respond to what was considered to be serious heretical teaching of the followers of James Arminius (1560 – 1609), who rejected the basic Calvinist soteriology taught at the Geneva Academy by Theodore Beza.² Jacob Arminius in his Complete Works (Vol. 1. Pages 253-254) writes:

In this manner, I ascribe to the commencement, the continuance and the consummation of all good, and to such an extent do I carry its influence, that a man, though already regenerate, can neither conserve, will, nor do any good at all, nor resist any evil temptation, without this preventing and exciting, this following and co-operating grace. From this statement it will clearly appear, that I by no means do injustice to grace, by attributing, as it is reported of me, too much to man's free-will. For the whole controversy reduces itself to the solution

¹ This debate has been so fierce that in 2004 two books were published each by two professors. One was by Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, both professors of Systematic Theology in Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and the book was entitled, *Why I am not an Arminian*, so it was written definitely to defend the Calvinist view. The other was written by Jerry L. Wallis, Professor of Philosophy and Religion and Joseph R. Dongell, Professor of Biblical Studies, both professors in Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky, and the title of their book was *Why I am not a Calvinist*, definitely defending the Arminian position.

² Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, *Why I Am Not an Arminian*(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 9.

of this question, “is the grace of God a certain irresistible force?” This is, the controversy does not relate to those actions or operations which may be ascribed to grace, (for I acknowledge and inculcate as many of these actions or operations as any man ever did,) but it relates solely to the mode of operation, whether it be irresistible or not. With respect to which, I believe, according to the Scriptures, that many persons resist the Holy Spirit and reject the grace that is offered.³

Arminius declared that God’s glorious and unmerited grace is resistible. After he died in 1610, his followers in the Dutch Reformed Church, who came to be known as the Remonstrants, continued to question the Calvinistic teaching of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. Therefore, the best Reformed theologians internationally came together at Dort for a Synod whose decisions have been referred to as the Canons of Dort.⁴ This Synod stipulated what has popularly been known by the Acronym TULIP referring to the five doctrines listed above. The resistability or irresistibility of grace cannot be understood without a proper understanding of these canons. So there is need to briefly look at these canons. However, both the Calvinists and the Calvinists do everything to prove their position. For Calvinists, irresistible grace follows from the preceding points of Calvinism: total depravity, unconditional election, and limited atonement. One cannot these doctrines and deny irresistible grace. If the sinner is totally depraved, dead in sin, then it is only God’s grace that can make him alive again.

1. Total Depravity

By total depravity, the Synod simply meant that man is very sinful and God is very mad with man. According to the Synod, humanity is not just sinful in the sense that they sin but rather as a result of the Fall, they are utterly unable to respond to the call of the gospel because they are dead in their transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1). David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas point this out when they write, “The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his

³ Jacob Arminius, *The Complete Works of Jacob Arminius*, vol. 1 (n.d.), 253-254.

⁴ W. Robert Godfrey, "Unconditional Election," in *After Darkness Light: Essays in Honor of R. C. Sproul*, ed. R. C. Sproul(Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing Co, 2003), 54.

heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt.”⁵ On the other hand, Arminians claim that:

Although human nature was seriously affected by the Fall, man has not been left in a state spiritual helplessness. . . . Each person possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. . . . The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God’s Spirit and be regenerated or resist God’s grace and perish. Faith is man’s act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner’s gift to God; it is man’s contribution to salvation.⁶

For the Arminian, humanity is born good and is able to choose God while for the Calvinist, humanity is totally corrupt, dead in transgressions and sins, and so cannot choose God. Interestingly, the Calvinist position has progressively been losing its popularity. This trend is evident in the way the Enlightenment and modernity has developed from the seventeenth century to the present postmodernism. Unfortunately, the advance of modernity since the time of the Enlightenment, sin has been defined as bad example or moral failure and consequently sin is not taken seriously.

There were six key characteristics of the age of reason.⁷ The first of these was autonomy. The Enlightenment was a revolt against authoritarianism and emergence of individual reason and conscience as the primary arbiter of truth and action. The Enlightenment ideal is the duty of not entertaining any belief that is not warranted by rational evidence; hence there was no place for biblical and ecclesiastical authority because everything had to be ascertained by autonomous reason. The motto of the age of reason was, “Autonomy is the foundation of all true liberty.” In relation to religion, for the Enlightenment, God’s laws can only be followed autonomously by transforming divine commands into general laws which can become universal rational axioms of behavior. The fundamental ground for any belief was rational evidence.

The second characteristic of the age of reason was a peculiar kind of reasoning. The eighteenth century is known as the age of reason, but it was dominated by a peculiar kind of reason, different from the

⁵ David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*(Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co., 1963), 16.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 2nd ed., The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century, vol. I (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 5-11.

abstract reason of classical rationalism. The Enlightenment model of reason was the empirical, experimental reason of Francis Bacon and John Locke. What was required in this kind of reason was an examination of the facts of experience. They were able to examine, weigh, sift, and compare the facts again and again until one could discern the true from the false. The goal was to be able to make an exact analysis of things.

The third characteristic of the age of reason was nature. This was traced to Newton and his new science, that which was most “reasonable” was also “natural” grounded somehow in the very nature of things. Just as the laws of nature are orderly and uniform so also whatever is reasonable in the affairs of men should also be natural and universally found in every culture. Nature and her natural laws were revered even divinized.

The fourth characteristic of the age of reason was Melioristic optimism. This refers to a future hope of the betterment of humanity and the evidence of this was to be seen in the development and progress of the age. There was great optimism advanced by such men as Voltaire and Rousseau who had great hope for the advancement of posterity to a condition in accord with nature and reason. To this was added the Christian eschatological hope in the kingdom of God which was replaced by the belief that mankind is progressing towards a future in which it will be in accord with nature and reason.

The final characteristic of the age of reason was toleration. For the men of the Enlightenment the great enemy was not religion but dogmatism and intolerance. Their argument was that truth can never be certain enough such that contrary views should be suppressed since those views may later be proven to be correct. This kind of thinking was totally opposed to the concept of total depravity. The Canons were based on the two standards: God’s righteousness and God’s Word. Total depravity refers to the original sin, which refers to “original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.⁸ It just means that humans are totally corrupt in all faculties of body and soul. They are dead in their transgressions and sins” (Eph 2:1). Humanity is totally depraved and unable in their power to believe and be saved.

⁸ "Confession of Faith, 6.4."

They can never on their own choose God and this is contrary to the Enlightenment thinking that has preoccupied the Western thought from the seventeenth century to the present.

2. Unconditional Election

The second Canon is unconditional election. Since the Synod of Dort was refuting the Arminian claim that the Reformed position was sectarian, they tried to make clear that what they taught was both catholic and noncontroversial. They did not begin with speculative theology such as the mind of God in eternity. Article 7 in the Canons of Dort gives a definition of election. It states:

Article 7: Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, He has, out of mere grace according to the sovereign good pleasure of His own will, chosen from the whole human race, which had fallen through their own fault from their primitive state of rectitude into sin and destruction, a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, whom He from eternity appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect and the foundation of salvation. . . . and having powerfully preserved them in the fellowship of His Son, finally to glorify them for the demonstration of His mercy, and for the praise of the riches of His glorious grace; as it is written: “Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love: having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to good pleasure of His will, to the praise and glory of His grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved (Eph. 1:4, 5, 6). And elsewhere: “whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30).⁹

This summary statement of the doctrine of election carries five key points: (1) election is the unchangeable purpose of God, (2) God elects out of His good pleasure, (3) God elects specific individuals for life, (4) the elect cannot boast of their election, and (5) God provides everything we need for eternal life.¹⁰ Therefore, in His sovereign will God elected some to be saved, as Curt Daniel puts it, “If men must believe to be saved but are unable to do so, how is it that some of them do in fact come to believe?”¹¹ Since, a man naturally resists the grace of God, the only way that grace can be effectual is for it to be

⁹ Godfrey, 60-61.

¹⁰ Ibid., 61-62.

¹¹ Curt Daniel, *The History and Theology of Calvinism*(Dallas: Scholarly Reprints, 1993), 378.

irresistible because if it is not effectual then nobody can ever be saved. The Westminster Confession states it thus:

All those whom God has predestined unto life, and those only He pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.¹²

This irresistible grace is applied upon the elect sinner by the Holy Spirit first by means of a special calling (Matt 22:14; Rom 8:30, cf. 2 Pet 1:10; Rom 1:6-7; 11:29; I Cor 1:9; Eph 4:1; 2 Tim 1:8-9). However, this irresistible grace is not brute force. “God does not save us by grabbing us by the scruff of the neck and drug us kicking and screaming to the cross.”¹³ God does not use force. He does not force us to be saved. He uses the power of love.

On the contrary, Arminians argue that while it is true that God elected some for salvation before the foundation of the world, this election was based on God’s foreknowledge. God foreknew those who would believe the gospel and chose them. Ultimately it is not God but their faith that saves them. This begs the question: how different is foreknowledge from predestination? Foreknowledge is “God’s prescience or foresight concerning future events,”¹⁴ and predestination is “God’s predetermination of persons to a specific end.”¹⁵ However, is it possible for God who is sovereign to have foreknowledge of something that fails to come to pass? Does that not imply that God has the capacity to be mistaken? Thus, the Reformed idea of election is more viable than the Arminian. God elects some sinners who are totally depraved and then through the Holy Spirit effectually calls them unto salvation.

¹² "The Westminster Confession (1646)," in *Creeeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, ed. John H. Leith (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1982), X:1.

¹³ Daniel, 381.

¹⁴ G. W. Bromiley, "Foreknowledge," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 458.

¹⁵ S. R. Spencer, "Predestination," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 950.

The fact that we are totally depraved and only some are elect and that God's irresistible grace will bring the elect to Christ for salvation raises a disturbing question: am I elect? This question has paralyzed a lot of people with such thoughts as, "if God is going to elect me to salvation, He will just have to do it" or asking such questions as, how can I know I am elect? There is only one way to know. It is only whether or not you have responded to the gospel (Acts 16:31). Some have even gone as far as not seeing the necessity for evangelism, after all God has already elected those who will be saved.

3. Limited Atonement

The L of Tulip is limited atonement. In this article, the Synod tried to answer the question: what did the death of Christ accomplish? The answer can be said to be that the death of Christ accomplished the realization of God's eternal purposes. It encompassed both the end and the means of redemption.

John Owen provides a convincing argument as to the defense of limited atonement he argues that God accomplished what He intended by the death of Christ. Owen uses three significant words in this argument: agent, means, and end. The *end* is what the *agent* intends to accomplish by an action. The end is the first, principal, *moving cause* of the whole. No agent applies itself to an action but for an end. To accomplish anything, one has: to lay down an aim, then a design, and then the means. The whole reason and method is determined by the desired end which is aimed at. The means is everything used to achieve the end. The means and the end are measured by a *rule* or *law* prescribed by the agent. Secondary agents such as men have an end set and appointed to their actions by Him who gives them an external rule or law to work by, which will always attend them in their working, whether they will or no. God's will and His good pleasure is the sole rule of all human action and men can never deviate in their actions nor have any end attend or follow their acts not intended by Him. The means becomes the meritorious cause of the end. The *means* is what the agent does. Means is of two kinds: (1) those which have true goodness in themselves without reference to any further kind, (2) those which have no good at all in any kind in themselves but only as conducive to the end to which they are fit to attain. They receive their goodness from that for which they are appointed.

Therefore, the *agent* is the doer of the action. In the matter of limited atonement, the *agent* is the triune God, the means is the atonement, and the *end* is the salvation of the lost. The end which God effected by the death of Christ was the satisfaction of His justice. The end for whose sake he did it was either supreme, or his own glory; or subordinate, ours with Him.¹⁶

The work of the *Father as agent* of our salvation and His agency was in sending the Son and in punishing Him for our sins (51). The Father loves the world and sends the Son to die for the world (John 3:16, 17; Rom 8:3, 4; 3:25; Gal 4:4, 5; John 10:36, 37). God had promised that he would send a savior (Isa (48:16). The Father sometimes is called our savior (I Tim 1:1; Tit 1:3; Luke 1:47; I Tim 4:10; Tit 2:10; 3:4). The sending of Christ is distinguished in three acts. (1) An authoritative imposition of the office of Mediator, which Christ willingly undertook. By dispensing of this office, the Father exercised a kind of superiority, while the Son humbled himself (Phil 2:6-8). The purposed imposition of his counsel or his eternal counsel for the setting a part of his Son incarnate to this office (Ps 2:7, 8; Ps 110:1, 4). He appointed him heir of all things (Heb 1:2), made him judge (Acts 10:42), and for his tasks he was ordained before the foundations of the world (I Pet 1:20; Rom 1:4; 8:29). The entire work of Christ was first determined by God's sovereign counsel beforehand according to Acts 4:28. The entire work of atonement that Christ carried out was according to the eternal counsel of God (Acts 15:18). First, the Father entered into a covenant with the Son concerning the work the Son was going to undertake. This is called the covenant of redemption. The actual *inauguration* or solemn admission of Christ into his office, committing all judgment unto the Son (John 5:22), making Him to be both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and appointing him over his whole house (Heb 3:1-6). By virtue of this appointment of the Son the angels were to worship him (Heb 1:6). God confirmed this appointment of His Son by ending the Spirit in Form of a dove (Matt 3:16), crowning the Son with glory and honor and sitting him on His right hand (Heb 1:3), giving him a name above every name

¹⁶ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*(Edinburgh: Johnston & Hunter, 1852; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 48-51.

(Phil 2:9-11), and thus Christ was gloriously inaugurated into the office of Mediator.

The Father entered into covenant and compact with the Son concerning the work to be undertaken and the issue thereof, of which there are two parts: in the covenant, the Father was going to assist in the accomplishment and perfect fulfilling of the whole business of which he was undertaking, which included protecting the Son. He promised success or good to come out of all his sufferings and a happy accomplishment of his undertaking. Whatever God promised his son would be fulfilled and that was what the Son aimed for in His undertaking. Owen wonders how God could punish His Son for the sins of those who were to be saved and continue to punish them for the same sins (59), as proposed by the asserters of universal redemption. See Heb 2:10; I John 4:9). On top of that God gave the elect to Jesus (John 17:4, 17-19, 20, 21, 24, and 9). The promise of God to His Son and the request of the Son to His Father are directed to the peculiar end of bringing sons unto God. The laying upon him the punishment of sins everywhere is ascribed unto the Father (Isa 53:4, 6, 10; II Cor 5:21; Acts 4:27, 28; Luke 22:43, 44).¹⁷

What did Christ undergo for sinners? For whom did he undergo all these? He died in our stead. He took the punishment due to our sin. But who are *we*? God poured His wrath due to sin upon Christ. How could he suffer for sin and those he died for suffer for sin again in hell? Either Christ died for “all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some sins of all men.”¹⁸ If he died for some sins of all men, all men have some sins to answer for, so no man shall be saved (Ps 130:3). Christ died for all sins of some men. Christ died for the sins of the elect. If all the sins of all men, why are all not saved? “Because of unbelief?”¹⁹ But is unbelief sin or not sin? If it is sin, then Christ died for it. If it is not sin, then why should they be punished for it?²⁰ This is the basis of limited atonement.

¹⁷ Ibid., 51-60.

¹⁸ Ibid., 61.

¹⁹ Ibid., 62.

²⁰ Ibid.

4. Irresistible Grace

Now we move to the I which is irresistible grace and which is what we are dealing with in this article. Simply put, the doctrine of irresistible grace refers to the biblical teaching that whatever God decrees to happen will inevitably come to pass, even in the salvation of individuals. The Holy Spirit will work in the lives of the elect so that they inevitably will come to faith in Christ. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. Jesus Himself declares:

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:37-40).

As we have stated earlier, at the heart of this doctrine is the question:

Why does one person believe the Gospel and another does not? Is it because one is smarter, has better reasoning capabilities, or possesses some other characteristic that allows them to realize the importance of the Gospel message? Or is it because God does something unique in the lives of those that He saves? If it is because of what the person who believes does or is, then in a sense they are responsible for their salvation and they have a reason to boast. However, if the difference is solely that God does something unique in the hearts and lives of those who believe in Him and are saved, then there is no ground for boasting and salvation is truly a gift of grace. Of course the biblical answer to these questions is that the Holy Spirit does do something unique in the hearts of those who are saved. The Bible tells us that God saves people “according to His mercy...through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit” ([Titus 3:5](#)). In other words those who believe the Gospel and are saved do so because they have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. ²¹

To help us think about irresistible grace we need to think about the fact that God created *ex-nihilo*. If we were sincere in our thinking, we would realize that God's act of creating *ex-nihilo* was in fact irresistible. The same God who called everything from the nothing is the same God who calls the elect from the state of spiritual death unto

²¹ "Irresistible Grace: Is It Biblical?", <http://www.gotquestions.org/irresistiblegrace.html> (accessed July 2nd 2009).

life and His call is irresistible. Another analogy that can give us some light into this matter is the issue of physical birth. Our being born is irresistible in terms of when and where we are born. Yet Scripture talks of salvation as being born again (John 3:3-8). We can also think of Jesus' act of raising Lazarus. Lazarus was raised irresistibly (John 11:40-44). Therefore, when Scripture says it is by grace we are saved through faith (Eph 2:8), that grace is irresistible.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of God's irresistible grace. He is the one who applies the salvation attained by the death of Christ in the life of the elect. Scriptures are full of examples of this. "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Again, in the case of Lydia, the Lord opened her heart (Acts 16:14).

This irresistible grace is also referred to as effectual calling and Douglas J. Wilson puts it, "When God calls, the dead hear it."²² Effectual call not only brings us to salvation but also is an ultimate declaration that by our human efforts and righteousness we can never attain salvation. We need God's effectual call.

If you come to think of it, God's omnipotence and sovereignty means that His power cannot be resisted by any of the things He created. Interestingly, there are a lot of people today who are scared by this power. Process theologians as well as feminist theologians are doing all they can to make sure they change the language used in reference to God and part of the reason is because they are scared by this power. Elizabeth Johnson asks the question: "What is the right way to speak about God?"²³ Then she goes on to attack the masculine language used in the Bible in talking about God and proposes some feminine symbols which she is quite convinced are the best of speaking about God.

B. The Significance of Irresistible Grace

Irresistible grace is a source of comfort for Christians. If we deny the irresistibility of God's grace, we would be denying what Scripture teaches concerning God's sovereign grace. If God's grace is resistible,

²² Douglas J. Wilson, "Irresistible Grace," in *After Darkness, Light: Essays in Honor of R. C. Sproul*, ed. R. C. Sproul (Phillipsburg: P & R. Publishing Co., 2003), 147.

²³ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co, 2005), 3.

our assurance of salvation has no grounds. The irresistible grace of God is the power that draws sinners to Christ.

C. Preaching Election and Irresistible Grace

Can one preach the gospel and give a sincere invitation to his or her hearers to receive Christ as their personal Savior and at the same time teach unconditional election and Irresistible grace? Does the making of a sincere offer of the gospel destroy the doctrine of unconditional election and irresistible grace? First, we ought to remember that the sincere offer of the gospel in all its freeness and the call for a response from our hearers is based upon the sufficiency of what Christ accomplished on the cross. When God calls upon sinners to believe, He is calling them to believe that there is no other name given to men under heaven by which they can be saved, He is not calling them to believe that they are elect.

God elected Christ as the only means of salvation and He did everything that needed to be done for humanity to be saved. On top of that He sent the Holy Spirit to call sinners to salvation and those He effectively calls will definitely be saved. They cannot resist the grace of God. God also ordained the way sinners were to come to Christ. It was by the preaching of the gospel. They have first to hear the Word. That is the only way they can respond (Rom 10:17).

What is this grace that is irresistible? Jesus is the revelation of God's grace. The gospel is the preaching of the grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ. He personally became involved with the world while still fully God. Jesus Christ is then the epitome and the representation of the grace of God. In Christ lies the fullness of the grace of God and that grace is irresistible.

In conclusion, we should remember that God's grace is irresistible because there is no way humanity which is totally depraved can, by an act of their own will, be able to respond to God's grace. It is God who regenerates those He chooses for salvation. Salvation is God's doing from beginning to end. He Himself provided the means of salvation that is the atonement in His Son, Jesus Christ. He also sent the Holy Spirit to convict the world of their sinfulness and to cause them to respond to the gospel. Those who end up getting saved get saved because of God's grace and not of something they do (Eph 2:8-9). Those who are saved can never lose their salvation because salvation is the work of God. Hence, God's grace is

ultimately irresistible and this is what the gospel is all about and should be the content of our preaching.

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